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U. S. Department of Agriculture.

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, July 27, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "SOFT DRINKS FOR SUMMER." Information from the Food and Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Homemakers, I predict that you're going to be mighty thirsty before I'm through with today's report from the Federal Food and Drug Administration. I don't mean that our correspondent has sent us a dry report -- far from it! -- but she is discussing summer beverages -- soft drinks, orangeades, limeades, pop. . . .

Now what has the Federal Food and Drug Administration to do with a bottle of pop? I'll tell you. One of the duties of the Administration is to see that all non-alcoholic beverages, and beverage products, largely consumed by children, are safe and wholesome.

Every year, says our Washington correspondent, the children of the United States, and a good many grown people too, use eleven billion bottles of soft drinks. Into these bottles go tons of sugar, and millions of pounds of fruit acid. If you're one who likes figures, I can give you some that will make you sit up and take notice, while you sip a long cooling limeade. Into our soft drinks, every year, go 250 thousand tons of sugar -- tons, mind you, not pounds -- 5 million pounds of fruit acid, 50 thousand pounds of harmless artificial color, a million gallons of flavoring extract, and 400 million gallons of carbonated water.

Now you know what it takes to quench the national thirst for soft drinks.

Mr. J. W. Sale, Chief Chemist in charge of the Beverage Laboratories in the Federal Food and Drug Administration, says that practically all non-alcoholic beverages belonging to the soft drink class consist of sugar sirup, carbonated water, and small quantities of other ingredients that make an attractive drink. The sugar sirup is usually made with cane or beet sugar, acidulated with fruit acids, such as citric and tartaric. The carbonated water gives the drink a pleasant, sharp taste, and the bubbles make it look refreshing. In addition to these ingredients the Cola type beverages contain caffeine, about 1/3 to 1/4 of the quantity of caffeine found in a cup of tea or coffee.

Most soft drinks are colored. The colors used are the certified dyes -- harmless, and suitable for use in beverages and other foods. It doesn't take much coloring matter to color a soft drink; your correspondent says that the ordinary seven-ounce bottle of artificially colored soda contains about three-hundredths of a grain of added coloring matter, which -- taking her word for it -- is about as much as you could put on the head of a pin.

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The flavoring substances used in soft drinks include extracts taken from cloves, vanilla beans, and citrus fruit peel; and the seeds, roots, bark, stems and leaves of different plants. Fruit juices are also used to give flavor, and then there are the synthetic, chemical flavors, such as esters, higher aldehydes, and alcohols, all harmless.

Now here's an item that will interest everybody who likes orange type beverages. Seven or eight months ago, Secretary Wallace sent a notice to the orange beverage industry, calling attention to the number of diluted orange beverages on the market that were deceiving consumers by looking so much like genuine orange juice that the ordinary person couldn't tell the difference, until he had tasted the drink.

In Washington, D. C., and other places, the dairies were doing a tremendous business in "orange" drinks, selling them by the pint, quart, and gallon. Although these dairy orange drinks were labeled "Orangeade" on the paper caps, people were buying them as orange juice because the artificial color in them gave them the appearance of 100 per cent orange juice. These drinks actually contained only a very small amount of juice, a little flavor, and a great deal of floating orange pulp -- together with artificial color. Naturally, a good many people who wanted pure orange juice and thought they were getting it, complained about these drinks, colored like pure orange juice.

But here is the notice signed by Secretary of Agriculture Wallace: "Evidence has developed that the sale of diluted orange juice drinks, which, through the use of artificial color, simulate orange juice, is operating to deceive the consumer as to the identity of the article. The Department of Agriculture has reached the conclusion that such finished beverages and the 'concentrates' or beverage bases from which they are prepared, containing yellow artificial color, are adulterated under the Food and Drugs Act in a manner which cannot be corrected by any form of labeling. There is no objection under the Act to the sale, on their own merits, under truthful labels, of such articles if not artificially colored or otherwise treated in a manner to simulate pure orange juice."

And that concludes the notice sent to the orange beverage industry by Secretary Wallace.

Now, quoting Mr. Sale, of the Food and Drug Administration: "In these notices we are concerned with the question of consumer deception. Whether or not any particular product violates the Food and Drugs Act, from the standpoint of these notices, depends on whether or not the consumer is led to expect orange juice when the article is not orange juice, or, as is more likely to be the case, whether the consumer, because of the appearance of the article, is led to expect that he is getting a larger proportion of orange juice than is actually present."

Now what about the dairies that were putting on the market artificially colored drinks, colored like pure orange juice? According to your correspondent most of them are adjusting their products to conform to the provisions of the Pure Food Law. In other words, they are removing the artificial color, and retaining in the drink only the amount of orange pulp that naturally belongs to whatever percentage of pure orange juice is present in the drink.

You may be sure, concludes your correspondent, that the Food and Drug Administration is doing everything possible to protect you and your children by keeping off the market adulterated or misbranded beverages.
